

THE LAFAYETTE STATUE
IT WILL HAVE THE PLACE OF HONOR
IN WASHINGTON CITY.

Its Surroundings Teem with Historical Remembrances, So Many of Them in Fact, That but the Briefest Outline Thereof Can Be Here Given.

[Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, April 29.—It is said the most artistic and beautiful monument in Washington will be the Lafayette statue to be soon erected in Lafayette Park. At no time has there been the least of the sites, being given precedence in location over all the existing monuments of this truly monumental city. The statue of Lafayette will stand on a spot which is the very center of the capital of the country which that noble Frenchman helped into national life—a spot on which are focused tradition, history, romance

and beauty.

The northwest corner stands another famous house with a skeleton in its garret, Commodore Decatur, loved and honored by his countrymen for his gallant services, came home to pass the evening of his life. He built a handsome home and hung its walls with the trophies of his glory—swords presented by congress and by states services of platoons from cities, medals from congress and municipalities. In the prime of life he had sealed the very sum of his fame, but everything in family and form that the heart could desire. A general with Commodore Decatur an officer whose life he had saved, the interred of officious friends, a challenge, and our old house help into national life—a spot on which are focused tradition, history, romance

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The evening before the duel, a large party is assembled in Mrs. Decatur's drawing room, larger than and larger now than any other single apartment in a private house in this city. None gayer than Mrs. Decatur, who plays upon the harp at the request of friends. None more gallant and genial than Commodore Decatur. Next morning he rises early, and his wife goes asleep, seats out of the house and across Lafayette Park and out to Bladensburg, the dueling-ground. In a few hours he is brought back mortally wounded. He was followed to his grave by the president of the United States and the most illustrious men of his time. His widow shut herself within the walls of the blighted home, and in a few years was dead.

The site of the new Lafayette monument, and topographical suggestiveness. Beautiful and interesting as the monument is said to be, it cannot awaken more of our curiosity and interestness than the site which it is to occupy.

There are here in this park forest monarchs whose days go back to the arrival of the first English settlers. Some of these old fellows were planted or saved from destruction by the hand of Davy Burns, the Scotchman who had a farm here, a goody farm, which he did not want spoiled by the creation upon it of a national capital. Burns was as stubborn as he was sturdy, and tradition has it that it was in this old grove and orchard, Burns' favorite walking place, that he and George Washington at last came to terms over the surrender of the farm for the city. Perhaps it was right here that Davy spoke up with his family friends, and reminded the somewhat testy and, by this time, thoroughly irritated Washington that he, the father of his country, would not have amounted to much had he not married the rich Widow Custis.

The farm became the site of the capital, and this old orchard soon found itself a park directly in front of the president's house. Old Davy was thus made one of the richest land proprietors in America, and his pretty daughter became the first mark for the fortune-hunters of the city, which has seen perhaps more of its share of fortune-hunters than any town.

From the site of this new monument one may look past the White House and toward the river, and there is little old cabin in which testy Davy lived, standing just as it was when occupied by him, the first citizen of the capital. Only eighty-five years ago, within the memory of many men still living, Washington was simply an old field, covered everywhere with green grass and many bits of woods, and here and there with marshes and bog lands. Only in two or three places could the course of streets be discerned by the buildings which skirted them. The president's house was unfinshed, and Lafayette park, then known as Burns' orchard, was a desolate and poor cemetery.

One corner of it was occupied by the first church in the capital—a church which still stands and is duly used, for a young church, as churches go, not yet interesting for its antiquity. Where the Lafayette monument is to stand there was then a clump of cherry trees, from which the boys of the first school in Washington, hand by hand, used to steal the tempting fruit.

A few yards north of the Lafayette monument is the Jackson prancing horse, a memorial which the multitude admire and the critics condemn as absurd and impossible. Here the great guns were mounted by Jackson from the British at the famous battle of New Orleans. It is manifest that both monuments cannot remain. The stronger will overshadow the weaker, and the fine effects of both will be sadly marred. It is not yet determined what shall be done with Jackson, but probably he will be banished to some other park or circle.

Lafayette will stand looking at the White House, which is but a few hundred yards to the south. The vista before his eyes in that direction includes the Potowmack, the living Lafayette was destined to be a part of the wealthier parks. Danzilins, who owned that magnificent estate before it fell into the hands of the Washingtons and the Less. Near by are the treasury and war, state and navy buildings. A little to the east is the department of justice and the building which was the old United States bank. Far to the west are seen the heights of Georgetown the ancient. To the northwest and the northeast stretch two noble avenues studded with mansions, skirted with handsome mansions, and alive with the gay equipages of the

REWARD, TAYLOR AND MADISON HOUSES, modern capital. Almost at Lafayette's feet a score of presidents have stood in review of the processions of military and citizens which did honor to their inauguration occasions. Over the rustic stile which eight years ago crossed the fence directly opposite the Lafayette site—the rustic stile which Tom Moore snarled in his letters on the American capital—the early presidents used to climb for their morning walks in the Burns orchard.

The romance and the tragedy of history appear to cling about this old park with remarkable tenacity. On the south the contributions which the White House might make to this park are beyond the power of history to tell. On the southeast corner of the building now so nearly less to history. It is the old club house, which Secretary Blaine and family now occupy. It was erected by Commodore Rodgers, of the navy, for his own home. He did not live long enough to get much enjoyment out of it. Next it became a fashionable boarding house, then a club house. It was from one of the upper windows of the club house that Barton Key began his handkerchief flirtation with Mrs. Slickles, in the window of another famous house across the park. It was to the very room in the club house now occupied by Secretary Blaine as a sleeping apartment that Key was to be after being fatally shot by Gen. Slickles in the street. It was in this house that Secretary Seward lived for eight years, and here he was nearly assassinated by Payne, the accomplice of Booth. Here Mr. Seward and his son languished many months while slowly recovering from the injuries inflicted upon them, and here the only daughter, who had been her father's helpmeet and companion, lingered and died. She had been a witness of the assault upon her father, and never recovered from the shock and the agony of that moment.

The list of fatalities and tragedies associated with this house is a long one. After the rewards, the same as tenants of the family of Gen. Seward, the same as the family of Mrs.

Belknap was one of the most beautiful and lovable women of the capital, but she had not been long in this ill-fated house before she sickened and died. The next tenants of importance were the Blaines, and the death of a son and daughter of that household within the walls of the luckless building, and the death of a brother of Mr. Blaine and a sister of Mrs. Blaine's within a month or two, complete the tale of woes which the building contains.

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There has been, however, especially among journalists, in the tide of humanity which flows westward an eddy which has brought western men back to the east. The latest and a most conspicuous current on this eddy is Murat Halstead, the brilliant Ohio editor, who has just taken charge of The Standard-Union, of Brooklyn. His career as editor of The Cincinnati Gazette has been too prominent to require recapitulation here, even if his recent political misadventures had not refreshed the memory of the public so completely.

"Field Marshal" Halstead, though he has chosen to take a position in the suburbs instead of in the metropolis, will find himself lonely. "The woods are full" of Western men in his own profession. In the rank and file—among the reporters—there are scores who have come here and succeeded, to say nothing of those who have failed, after a more or less successful experience on the Western papers. And in the higher ranks—among newspaper proprietors and managing editors—there is a good sprinkling of men who were fairly to be called famous before they came here.

His most conspicuous among them is Joseph Pulitzer, the editor and owner of The World. No man of this generation of workers has done so much to modify the methods of New York journalism as he. His rise in life, from rags to riches, was a boy's dream come true, and he bought The Post Dispatch, has been often in talk, especially by his enemies. Mr. Pulitzer has a talent for making enemies, but the bitterness among them never ceases to disgust his ability. The methods he adopted, or rather translated from St. Louis, when he bought the moribund World have resulted in success. And though those methods are sensational in the extreme, and are often denounced as scandalous, they have been to some extent copied by nearly all his competitors.

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